CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A method of agitating poultry within an enclosed area, comprising:

   (a) a self-propelled autonomous robot or plurality of self-propelled autonomous robots with a programmable, variable, and periodic schedule of activation within said enclosed area,

   (b) inducing movement of said poultry due to the stimuli presented by the motion and proximity of said robot or plurality of robots within said enclosed area,

   whereby said poultry is induced to feed at on a programmable schedule established by the poultry industry, or specific poultry producer, by activation of said robot or plurality of robots thereby increasing said poultry's growth-to-feed-consumed ratio.

2. A system for agitating poultry within an enclosed area, comprising:

   (a) a robot or plurality of robots

   (b) said robot within said plurality of robots, comprising:

   sensing means on said robot, for providing signals for detecting proximity to objects;

   locomotion means on said robot, to cause said robot to move autonomously;

   computational means on said robot, to accept input signals from the sensing means, interpret said signals as distance from objects within an enclosed area, and provide speed and steering commands to the locomotion means based on said sensor signals, thereby guiding said robot about the desired path within the inner perimeter of said enclosed area;

activation means on said robot, to activate said robot according to said periodic schedule of activation;

power means on said robot supporting said sensing means, said locomotion means, said computational means, and said activation means; and

casing means to protect said robot's internally mounted components from the environment of said enclosed area.

3. A system according to claim 2, wherein a radio transmitting device provides radio frequency positioning signals for detection by the said sensing means of the robot to be used for navigation.